1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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bhai, the Hindi word for all brothers; in both cases, of course, 601
'brother' is not used in our narrow sense, but includes paternal cousins of the same generation in any degree. The son of any father related to me as my *pepi* or father's elder brother counts as my *dada* or elder brother, and the son of any father related to me as my *kaka* or father's younger brother counts as my *tamo* or younger brother. *Akomama*, the word used to designate affine or wife-clans, is a combination of *ako* and *mama*; the Hill Marias call their mother's father *ako*, and a man uses the same term for both his daughter's son and his daughter's daughter, who, of course, would be his affines and not his kindred; a Hill Maria man applies the term *mama* not only in the ordinary Hindi way to his mother's brother (or parallel cousin), but also to his wife's father and to her brother's son.

In theory, therefore, marriage is permissible between a man 582
and any woman of any wife-clan, with, however, certain definite 607
exceptions. The chief of these is the strict rule prohibiting a man marrying his wife's elder sister, which is stressed at Bison-horn marriages by the bridegroom putting the ring which he gives her in a cloth which she holds out, and not on her finger, as he does with the ring he gives to his wife's younger sister, and by the elder sister when she receives the ring in her cloth telling the bridegroom that thenceforth he must neither touch her nor utter her name. A man may not marry his mother-in-law or her co-widow or any woman related to them as a 'sister',[1] or any of his aunts[1] or nieces,[1] even though of an *akomama* or wife-clan. In theory, there is nothing to prevent him marrying his daughter's daughter, a young widow of his father's father, his father's mother's sister or his mother's father's sister; in practice, however, disparity of age usually rules out such unions, and in all the villages in which I have investigated Hill and Bison-horn Maria marriages I have never come across an actual example of any of them; I found one case, however, in which a man had married his elder brother's daughter's daughter. Lastly, just as a man may not touch or marry his wife's elder sister, so a widow may not marry her dead husband's elder brother, though she can, and frequently does, marry his younger brother. [587]

Offences against the rules of exogamy occur, but very rarely 684
among the Hill Marias, and only slightly less rarely among the Bison-horn. A youth of the Gume hill clan at Toinar was accused in 1929 of 935

[1] Using 'aunt' and 'niece' like 'brother' in the extended sense, to cover not only actual aunts and nieces, but also female cousins once removed. 'Sister' similarly includes paternal female cousins of the same generation in any degree.

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588 cases there is no bride-price, though the deserted husband can claim from the new husband the bride-price which he paid when he married the woman, a *gudapal* cousin can claim Rs. 5 compensation if an unmarried girl goes to some other man, and a younger brother of the dead husband can claim Rs. 5 compensation if a widow goes to a new husband. Sometimes when parents or parties to a marriage are very poor and cannot afford the expense of a regular wedding they merely start to live together in this way, either performing the marriage ceremony later when they have had time to collect the means required, or else distributing tiny cakes to their clan-fellows instead. The term *aghmirtur* or *armirtur* is sometimes applied to the elopement of an unmarried girl or a wife with another man.

583 *Peyse'ottur* or marriage by capture still occurs, though getting rarer every year. We have seen how, when a girl remains unmarried her parents will arrange for her cross-cousin to carry her off; and in the Bison-horn *pendul* regular marriage described above there is an element of marriage by capture in the way in which the bride feigns resistance when the bridegroom's party begins to escort her to his village and when she is finally parted from the girls of her own village with a show of force by the bridegroom's younger brother and his friends. In fact, the Hill and Bison-horn Maria custom of the bride being taken off from her native village to the bridegroom's village and of the wedding taking place there may be a survival of a former general custom of marriage by capture. When the girl is unmarried and is carried off by her cross-cousin at her parents' request, they usually explain matters to her as she is being carried off and advise her to make the best of it. I found only one Bison-horn Maria who admitted having really captured his wife in 'the good old way once so prevalent in the Killepal, Dantewara, Pharaspal, Kuakonda and Aranpur *parganas*, probably in the whole of the Bison-horn country. He was reticent about the whole affair, though apparently the girl had been willing to marry him, but her parents had objected. According to old records the practice was for the villagers of the girl's village to beat the invading party of youths until it had crossed the village boundary with the girl; Russell and Hiralal (III, p. 79) state that the women only used to beat the invaders in this way, the invaders making no effort to retaliate, and the marriage being completed by the gift of a cloth to the girl on arrival in the captor's village and a *landa* carousal by the invading party.

587 Widow marriage is common among all Marias. In the hills, widows usually go to their husband's younger brothers without any

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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ceremony; I found no case in which any widow had married a man who was not her dead husband's brother (or parallel-cousin). Indeed, owing to the distances between Hill Maria villages and the fact that in nearly all of them the men are all of one clan, irregular marriages are far less common there than in the mixed-clan villages of the Bison-horn Marias. Among the latter the second husband has sometimes to compensate the dead husband's parents in part for the bride-price paid by them when their son married the widow, as well as compensating their younger son, if any. Sometimes the widow and second husband sit side by side on stools, the widow wearing a new cloth and new ornaments, and near relatives put marks on their foreheads with oil and turmeric. There is also sometimes a ceremony to transfer the widow from the clan of her former to that of her new husband; two pieces of grass are placed together in the form of a cross to represent a man, and this cross is separated from another by a knife. Two leaf-cups are filled with water, and three times water is poured from one into the other. The two grass crosses representing the two husbands are sprinkled thrice with the water, and then the heads of the crosses are plunged together first into one cup and then into the other. The knife is regarded as the witness of this transfer of the woman from one clan to the other. When a woman elopes from one husband to another, there is sometimes a similar reconciliation ceremony between the two men after the new husband has obeyed the *panchayat's* decision as to the compensation to be paid to the first husband; their four hands are placed together, and water is poured thrice over them.

It has been seen that women not only have practically free choice among the Hill Marias and considerable choice among the Bison-horn Marias as to their husbands, and that among the latter a woman frequently goes off to a new husband if she wants to. This is practically all that there is in the way of divorce, the position being regularized by the *panchayat* insisting on the new husband paying the appropriate compensation, which is generally only the bride-price paid for the woman at her original marriage. The children, if any, remain in the father's custody, since they belong to his clan. Women often desert their first husband if they have no children and consider his sterility the cause. Physical revulsion from an abnormality is another known cause; a Kuruk Maria fishing girl in the Behra Mar hill *pargana* ran away from a husband with a withered leg, which she said had been wasted away by an angry demon (*rau*), and despite her father's and brother's entreaties to her not to put them to the expense of having to refund to her husband the heavy bride-price of Rs. 70 that he had paid them for her, absolutely refused to return. Hare-lipped men seem to have

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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691 partition of a father's property when a son sets up house for himself,
421 but although he can press for his share, it is felt by the community to be against tribal spirit, rather than unfilial. When, on the other hand, a father had outraged tribal feelings by seducing his sons' wives and driving his sons from his house, his refusal to let his sons have any share in the family property was considered by the Bison-horn Marias an additional justification for his subsequent murder by his sons.

691 There is so little domestic property of great value among the
428 Hill Marias, and so many of a man's few tools and possessions, as we have seen, are buried with him, that inheritance disputes about
768 movable property are almost unknown. Though among the Bison-horn Marias less is buried or burned with the dead, the remaining movable property generally passes with the house; if the elder sons have set up separate establishments in their father's lifetime they will have equipped themselves with the few possessions they need, and will not worry about the younger brother appropriating what their father has left. Women's ornaments generally are buried or burned with them.

428 When the inheritance includes valuable rice-lands, they remain generally the joint property of the sons and brother's sons, and the father's surviving brothers, the eldest son generally nominally being the manager, though he will certainly have to give way to an uncle or younger brother or cousin if he is inefficient, weak-minded or deformed. The produce will be stored in his granary, but shared among the members of the family.

428 Daughters and sisters have no right of inheritance of their
736 father's or brothers' lands or property. For the land is really the land of the clan, and the daughters and sisters will on marriage
587 have passed to the clans of their husbands. A widow is entitled only to maintenance, and as on her husband's death she very often becomes the wife of his younger brother, she gets her maintenance as a matter of course; if he leaves no younger brother and she does not marry again, she lives on in her late husband's house and works with other women of the family, and is maintained by their husbands. A girl whose parents die before she is married frequently goes to a married sister's house and becomes a co-wife.

562 For a woman on the whole is a kind of property, or a valuable adjunct to the house and family. For her, the husband's family has had to pay a bride-price that is a severe tax on its resources[1]; or else, where cross-cousin marriage prevails,[2] she represents the repayment of a debt incurred when her father took his bride from

[1] See pp. 248-50 and 252-3 above.
[2] See pp. 234 and 247 above.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

III. Six Kinds of Marriage

583 As in other parts of aboriginal India, the Muria recognize several different types of marriage, which for convenience I will give in tabular form.

585 (i) *Ostasāna marmi* (Halbi, *sopni bihao*). This is the traditional Gond marriage; the parents, after anointing the girl with haldi, send her to the bridegroom's house where the Lagir is performed.

(ii) *Talk dayna* (Halbi, *chal bihao*). This is the Hinduised modification of the Gond marriage and is performed partly in the bride's and partly in the bridegroom's house. The Lagir is held outside the bride's house. It is known as Chat-marmi in Betul and is only performed when the contracting parties have quarrelled.[1]

(iii) *Arwitāna* (Halbi, *udaliya*[2]). This is the marriage of a chelik and motiari who elope to a friend's house and have the rites there without the approval of their parents. The full ceremonies may be performed, but the bridegroom has to pay for them himself.

(iv) *Haiwark wāt* (Halbi, *paisa mundi* or *paitu*). Here a girl runs away from her parents' house and forces marriage on a boy of her choice. She arrives, sits down and refuses to go away.

●[587] (v) *Tika tasāna* (Halbi, *haldi-pāni bihao*). This is the simple and inexpensive ritual performed either for a widow or widower who remarries, for the marriage of divorced persons or for an adulterous marriage.

(vi) *Yer dosāna marmi* (Halbi, *bhul bihao*). This is the hurried marriage when a motiari is found to be pregnant. If the boy to whom she is engaged is willing to marry her in spite of this and is willing to accept the child as his own, it is called a *bhul bihao*. If the marriage is with the boy who caused the pregnancy it is simply a *yer dosāna* or 'pouring-water marriage'.[3]

585 I will describe in very considerable detail the first two types of marriage. The others may be disposed of more expeditiously.

The *Arwitāna* marriage is often performed with the full rites, though naturally somewhat modified by the absence of the parents, and the fact that the bride and bridegroom are attended by chelik and motiari of another ghotul.

The *Haiwark wāt* marriage is celebrated when a girl leaves her home and forces herself upon her lover. When the boy asks her what she wants, she says she has come for *paisa mundi*. If the boy is willing, and sometimes even if he is not very enthusiastic about it, the marriage is performed as soon as possible. That very evening the chelik and motiari assemble and build a simple booth with only five pillars. Bride and bridegroom sit in this and the Gaita places rapidly-made crowns on their heads, and puts haldi and oil on their bodies. The village people do tika and the chelik and motiari take bride and bridegroom seven times round the booth and someone pours water and haldi over them.

587 The *Tika tasāna* marriage is simple and inexpensive. It often has to be, for in the case of adultery, elopement or a marriage after divorce, the new

[1] Trench, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 80.

[2] Russell says this means 'Love in the fields'—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 466.

[3] To these forms of marriage many parallels may be found in other Indian tribes as well as in traditional Hinduism.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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bridegroom has to pay up the expenses of the original marriage and sometimes compensation to the original husband as well as a fine to the panchayat. The ceremony is performed inside the house, bride and bridegroom sitting together. The bridegroom puts a cloth on a wooden seat, pours liquor on it and hands it to his bride. She rolls up mango leaves into little *kiswa* and puts them in her ears. There is no dancing, no anointing with haldi, no going round the booth. Visitors place a tika mark of dry rice without the usual oil or haldi. 587

The Gaita sprinkles the new cloth of the bride with liquor and gives a little sermon: 'O Mahapurub, this man's house has been broken; this woman's house is broken. These two have we elders yoked. O Mahapurub, give them all they need to eat and drink. Let them have sons and daughters. For all their visitors let there be enough.'

Then the newly married pair touch the feet of the village elders who bless them saying, 'Go brother and sister, live well and eat well; may you have children; when we come to visit you, give us a little water. May Mahapurub care for you.'

When a widow is remarried there is the same ceremony, and almost the same words are used except that instead of the reference to the broken houses, the elders speak of the loss of the husband. Should a widow be marrying an unmarried boy—as might easily happen if the girl had been married young—the boy is anointed with haldi and oil, but she is not.

The *dewar* or husband's younger brother has first claim upon a widow and if she marries anybody else, her husband has to compensate him. In some places, there is a formality by which a woman can avoid the reproach of widowhood without actually getting married. In Banjora, for example, she need not put on bangles; if she puts *kiswa* of mango leaves in her ears in the name of her *dewar* or her grandson, she is no longer a widow'. At Bopna, when Gagra's father died, his widow put what are called *kâli kiswa* in her ears. As they described the incident to us, 'she said to herself, "Since there is an Anga in our house no one will eat from my hands now I am a widow. I will put *kiswa* in my ears and bangles on my wrists in the name of my *dewar*; if I don't, my relations will fine me and even men of my own house won't eat with me." So thinking, she went to a bazaar, and on her way home she picked a couple of mango leaves, rolled them up and put them in her ears in the name of the bazaar. After that she was no longer regarded as a widow.'

Sometimes old women put these *kiswa* in their ears in the name of their grandsons. 'If there is no husband for you, marry your grandson.' In Gudia, Lakmu's father's brother's mother put *kiswa* for Lakmu. It is generally said that a grandmother can put these ornaments in the name of her own son's own son, that is, her real, and not merely her classificatory, grandson.

Finally, we have the sad and furtive ceremony that is performed when a motiari has the misfortune to conceive. A booth with only five pillars is erected, relations apply haldi to both bride and bridegroom, but the leaf-crown is put only on the bridegroom's head. He has to go alone round the booth for the Lagir ceremony accompanied by a man carrying the marriage kalsa-pot, which represents his wife. They then sit together and tika is made with rice mixed with haldi and oil. A pregnant girl may never go round the booth for the Lagir ceremony. 585

Irregular marriages, obviously, can be celebrated at any time of the year; but regular marriages are performed only in the hot weather (March to May).

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

593 A month later, the girl left her husband's house and again eloped with the Sirdar. They were again pursued, caught and brought back. The Sirdar
152 was fined five rupees, and the girl's father had to pay five rupees to her husband who then accepted his wife back again without demur. In a similar case at
837 Garhbangal, the villagers said that 'the boy was so angry that he did not sleep with her for two nights'. 'But', they added, 'he had her four times on the third night.' I cannot believe that this shows a very high degree of domestic jealousy, especially as it was suggested that the real cause of the husband's temper was the fact that he had to pay two rupees compensation to the panch, the usual fine for allowing yourself to be cuckolded. I know of one case, but only one, where a girl could not bear the thought that her husband had made another girl pregnant, even though the girl was safely married to someone else. A former Nakedar of Binjhli described how she quarrelled with him for a whole year about the baby he had by the Piosa. 'Why didn't you marry her, if you were so fond of her as to give her a baby? Why don't you bring the child to the house? Then you can turn me out', and so on. At last he gave her a good beating and 'since then', he said, 'we have been very happy together'.

This general absence of the often discussed *jalousie du passé* is the more remarkable in that a really serious cause of domestic friction exists in a husband's continued visits to the ghotul after marriage. A wife never has this privilege, but a husband may continue to go every night if he wants to and certainly during his wife's periods for at least six months and sometimes for several years. Young wives feel this to be unfair, and they naturally hate the thought of their husbands returning to their old lovers. One would have expected scores of marriages to have been wrecked in the first few months for this cause alone, but it is not so. It is said that the wife always forces her husband to have intercourse with her before he goes to the ghotul, thus immobilising him to some extent.

587 We must note finally that the Muria does not insist on his wife remaining
152 faithful to his memory by continuing a widow. Far from it, he insists that she should marry again as soon as possible. A dying man actually knows whose arms will embrace his wife within a month or two of his death, for his younger brother has a natural claim on her. In this also we see a remarkable absence of marital jealousy.

Looking through the great number of examples assembled by Westermarck and Briffault, the most remarkable thing about the Muria's attitude to jealousy is their recognition of it as a problem and a danger, and their deliberate attempt to educate it out of their lives. I think it more than probable that if their neighbours, the Bison-horn Maria, had the ghotul system fully developed, they would commit fewer murders.

IX. Quarrels and their Causes

152 For all this absence of jealousy, it would be absurd to suppose that Muria
578 life is an idyll undisturbed by quarrel or dispute. Yet on the whole Muria families live together very happily; quarrels are not common, and their cause is usually some breach of the law of equality which is so firmly instilled into the mind of every chelik and motiari during the ghotul period. Jealousy about food is said to be the most primitive expression of that passion. In the ghotul, and at all tribal feasts, the food is divided with meticulous exactitude: every piece of meat is counted; leaf-cups are made to a standard size; everyone gets exactly the same amount of liquor or parched rice. So too work must

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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girl's first menstruation is marked by special rites of purification. There is little conscious education of the young who grow up in natural freedom and learn by imitation. Marriage is generally adult, but is arranged by the parents and the cross-cousin marriage is common. Betrothal ceremonies are simple. The boy's father goes with gifts and a traditional formula is used—'We have heard there is a flower growing in your garden. We have come to pluck it and put it in our hair'. If a boy's family cannot afford the bride-price required, they may send him to serve as a Lamhada in the house of his future wife. His period of service is for three or five years, and the marriage is often celebrated before it is complete. Marriage by capture, which was probably the traditional method, has not yet died out, and occasionally there is a case of the reverse tradition when a girl comes as a Paitu and forces herself upon a man who is bound to marry her. Widow-remarriage is permitted and indeed enjoined, the husband's younger brother having the first claim on the person and property of the widow. Divorce is rare but is available to either husband or wife. The wife usually achieves it by eloping with another man and the husband in most cases accepts a *fait accompli*.

The actual marriage ceremony is also simple. There is no annointing with turmeric or oil, no perambulation of the sacred pole. Customs vary from place to place, but the traditional marriage has probably only three elements—a celebration which includes feasting, drinking and dancing, the pouring of water from the roof of a house or shed onto the bridal pair and the ceremonial consummmation of the marriage at which bride and bridegroom are forcibly shut up in a room together.

VI

Funeral ceremonies are more elaborate, and since this book is concerned with death, we will consider them in greater detail.

Maria thinking about the destiny and state of the soul after death is as confused as that of more sophisticated people. At least three contradictory views of the subject are held at the same time. I think that the oldest and characteristically

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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to go to the police. There was then the murder of Markami Handa by a young Maria Lohar in 1923. Handa had two wives and the younger, Bandi, fell in love with the young and attractive Masa who was employed as a farm labourer in a neighbour's house, and one day they eloped together. Some time previously Handa had warned the girl that, if she continued her friendship with the boy, he would kill them both. Indeed he took the intrigue so seriously that he moved his entire household to another village, but to no avail. Bandi seems to have been terrified for her lover's safety and when she heard how Handa was searching everywhere for her, she told Masa of the danger they were in, and Masa made up his mind to remove the dangerous husband so that he would be able to live freely with his girl. For four days and nights they enjoyed a sort of happiness in the jungle, then they went together under cover of darkness to Handa's house and climbed a tree outside the compound. Here they sat for a long time until they were sure that everyone was asleep. About midnight Masa went to the house, opened the bamboo door and shot Handa who was lying asleep on the ground near the entrance. Masa probably hoped to get away without being noticed, but unfortunately for him Handa's elder wife woke up and saw him clearly in the moonlight. He was arrested by the villagers the following day, and in due course was hanged. But Bandi, who was a young girl only eighteen years old, was acquitted.

This is, as far as I can see, a pure example of the murder for elimination. The only motive was fear of Bandi's husband. The difference between this and many European crimes is simply that it is more usual for civilized people to eliminate the inconvenient husband or wife first. Masa in true Maria fashion first got the girl, and then set to work to deal with the husband.

II

THE SIRISGUDA POISONING

Marvi Boti and his lover Mase, his elder 'brother's' wife, set about eliminating her inconvenient and rather useless husband, Marvi Bododi, in a more civilized fashion. Mase

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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674 and Bododi married each other rather late in life, and both
587 had been married before. Mase's first husband died leaving her with five children, and one of her daughters Dallo had been married three years at the time of the tragedy. Bododi also was a widower and had five children by his former wife, the youngest of whom, a boy named Hunga, was about twelve years old and lived with his father. The two lonely people met and married. They lived for some months in Mase's house at Maolibata, and then moved to Sirisguda in April 1940, where they were entertained by Bododi's younger 'brother' Boti. After a time they built a hut of their own close to Boti's house and went to live there.

674 Bododi's profession was that of a Siraha, but he seems to have been as poor a magician as he was a husband. Mase was a large vigorous woman, who expected much of life, and already by this time was getting tired of her elderly husband who produced so little money to run the household. Boti, as Bododi's younger 'brother', stood in a privileged relationship to Mase. Tribal custom regards an intrigue between those who stand to each other in this relationship very lightly and readily forgives it. Mase soon found herself fascinated by the young Boti, though when I saw him he was unattractive enough, with a broad stupid face and a very large flat nose.

Bododi's duties as Siraha always kept him on the move, and he was continually going from place to place treating his patients. In his absence Mase and Boti were naturally free to develop their friendship to the full. One night Bododi came home unexpectedly and found his wife absent. Mase's son-in-law Gagru, the husband of Dallo, had come there for a New Eating festival, and Bododi asked him where Mase was. He said she had gone to drink rice-beer somewhere. Bododi went to look for her, but failing to find her came back and sent Gagru in search instead. Gagru found Mase and Boti coming together out of a field of maize. Mase begged Gagru not to say anything about it, and went straight to Boti's house. Gagru went and told Bododi where his wife was hiding, and there was a violent quarrel.

Patients who came to Bododi's house for treatment reported other quarrels between Bododi and his wife. One